

DEKALB COUNTY

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PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Limited use of child health preventative services
2. Concerns regarding large number of sexually active teens
3. Obesity rate

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Limited use of child health care preventive services

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide education opportunities (videos, written material, etc.) to the Hispanic community regarding the benefits of prenatal care and routine well child checks
- provide Spanish educational material (videos, written materials, etc.) regarding car seats, safety issues and child care
- educate parents regarding the potential risks related to not receiving prenatal care

Concerns regarding the large number of sexually active teens

Policy Council Action Steps:

- promote public awareness of the dangers/risks of STD's and teen pregnancy
- support in-school based programs regarding the concerns related to STD's and teen pregnancy
- provide written materials in Spanish in an attempt to reach the Hispanic community

Obesity rate

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide educational opportunities to children and families regarding the risks of obesity
- education regarding the benefits of physical activity
- education regarding the benefits of healthy diets (increasing fruit and vegetable intake)

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Children exposed to use and making of crystal methamphetamine in their home

Policy Council Action Steps:

- develop cost free intensive outpatient treatment for patients. To be attended voluntarily without court intervention
- expand local transportation routes through rural areas and offer after business hours transportation
- develop opportunities for local policy departments to partner with child abuse/neglect investigators to provide a joint approach to offering community resources

Children suffering mental illness conditions without local non-residential treatment

Policy Council Action Steps:

- expand mental health counseling and supportive services to children
- develop aftercare services for children with mental illnesses returning to the community from residential treatment facilities

Education - Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Lack of funding for Fort Payne City & Dekalb county schools from state & local resources

Policy Council Action Steps:

- approach local leaders to request additional local funding
- increase public awareness of state report card results including local funding efforts
- develop a plan for disbursement of any additional local funds and share plan with public

Lack of proficiency in reading based on standardized test results

Policy Council Action Steps:

- increase parental awareness of standardized test results in reading
- provide in depth professional development opportunities for teachers in the area literacy
- provide students with scientifically based research programs in reading designed to increase proficiency in reading fluency and comprehension

Inability of some students to successfully complete certain sections of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (A.H.S.G.E)

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify students unable to successfully complete any portion of the A.H.S.G.E.
- evaluate current curriculum
- provide remediation in needed subject areas

Early Care and

Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Child care assistance for working parents

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify and pursue funding for child care payment assistance
- increase public awareness of the learning potential for children age 0-5
- establish a composite of all services in Dekalb County for children 0-5

Parental awareness for need of children ages 0-5

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify parent training that is available to parents in Dekalb County
- increase intra-agency networking to share resources and information
- identify incentives to motivate parents to participate in parenting classes

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Provide family assistance for the children of Dekalb county so their homes can become financially stable and meet their needs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- locate places to provide application for food stamps, WIC, and All Kids so that the general public will have easy access
- work with DHR (Welfare to Work program) and North Alabama Skills Center to help establish a family resource center

Parent Involvement and Skills

- Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Lack of appropriate parenting skills and involvement indicated by an increase in parental drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, increase in child abuse and neglect reports and increase in reported behavior problems from daycare to high school

Policy Council Action Steps:

- increase interagency networking to share resources and information
- identify incentives and motivators to increase parent's interest and participation in parenting education classes
- research and apply for grants for parenting classes that include funding to provide incentives for parents

Policy Recommendation

1. Reinstitute or utilize the Child Health Program
2. Make CPR/safety training mandatory for parents
3. Mandate STD/teen pregnancy prevention training in local schools
4. Increase number of physical education requirement to graduate high school
5. Require physicians to address obesity during Medicaid EPSDT screenings

